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Elicited learning strategy through students' mal-intended notes

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using the notes prepared by learners as memory assistance sheet. More specifically, the study sought to find out the effect of using such materials as a learning strategy on reducing their stress and panic before final examination and their attitude towards performance on the final examination. The participants were 106 ELT students in the European University of Lefke, Turkey. It had been felt that most of the students in this group were more inclined to cheat. The teacher made them use learning strategies by using made notes before exam. At the end of the fall semester of 2009, an attitude questionnaire was administered to elicit the students' thoughts about the effectiveness of such strategy in their final examination results. This study was a pilot study and the researcher tried in an attempt to predict an appropriate sample size and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project. Data from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS software, the Cronbach's alpha reliability was estimated for the questionnaire. The Bartlett's chi-square was performed to clarify the homogeneity of the variance. The tentative results of the study indicated that the reliability was .84 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. For a pilot study and with the present limited number of subjects the results were promising. It should be emphasized that the main study will be done again by revised Items and when administered to a larger sample, better results are expected. Therefore, it is hoped that ELT instructors could benefit from the findings of the current study by attempt using students' notes as an effective learning strategy. Such a strategy may result in engaging the students in using their notes in a positive way as a learning strategy before their final examinations.
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1. Introduction

In the era of language learning globalization progress, learning strategies have gained an unprecedented status. Language learning strategies are classified through different ways by researchers. Anderson (2003) classifies language learning strategies into seven major categories:

- cognitive strategies,
- metacognitive strategies,
- mnemonic or memory related strategies,
- compensatory strategies,
- affective strategies,
- social strategies, and
- self-motivating strategies

Language learning strategies are the conscious steps or behaviors used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of new information (Oxford, 2011).

Since the mid-1970s, learning strategies have been at the center of attention in L2 learning (Anderson, 1991,2003; Cohen, 1990, 1998; Hosenfeld, 1979; Macaro, 2001; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1993, 2002; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975;Wenden, 1991, 2002). Learning strategies are defined as techniques for understanding, remembering, and using information that are intentionally used and consciously controlled by the learner (Pressley & McCormick, 1995; Bialystok, 1978; Oxford, 1990, 1996).

In language learning area metacognition can be called as the ability to be conscious of one's mental processes, and during years it has been proved that the use of metacognitive strategies has been rare among language learners (Rahimi & Katal, 2011). Research shows that metacognitive learners who take conscious steps to understand what they are doing when they learn tend to be the most successful learners.

In addition to using metacognitive strategies, there is one other factor that should be considered and researchers have begun to recognize that it is teachers who apart from the methods and materials they may use, are central to improving English language teaching (Freeman, 2001; Johnson, 1992a; Richards & Nunan, 1990) and of course it is important that teachers strive to develop students' own metacognition and teach them how to use strategies that they find effective for the kinds of tasks they need to accomplish in the process of language learning (Goh, 2008). This recognition has led a shift from language instruction toward the needs of individual learners. In addition, language teachers have become aware that learning is a process and the role of the teacher is to facilitate that process. Thus, language learning strategies and factors influencing their usage have been the focus of recent studies (O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Cohen 1998; Chamot et al, 1999; Chamot 2005, Griffiths, 2007).

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Sample

This research was carried out on the sample of 106 students who participated in the study. All of them were ELT students in the European University of Lefke, Turkey. It had been felt that most of the students in this group were more inclined to cheat. The teacher made them use learning strategies by using mal-intended notes before exam. It was done in two parts; one part before mid-term exam and the other part before final exam. The students learned how to make and use their notes before exam. They made summarized notes with highlighted keywords of whole course in just one sheet of paper. It made them the process of learning easy. So they did not need to use that notes during their exam because the notes made them ready for the exam and reduced their stress.

2.2. Instrumentation

Data were gathered from a questionnaire which was designed according to Oxford (1990) on six categories of second language learning strategies including cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, memory-related

strategies, compensatory strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. It was not piloted and through this study it has been piloted and some items are required to be modified and revised for the future main study.

2.3. Data collection and Data analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS software. At first the data gathered through questionnaire were analyzed by using reliability statistics to pilot the questionnaire. Then the construct validity of questionnaire was measured. A factor analysis through varimax rotation is carried out to underlying construct of the 20 items of the questionnaire. The correlation matrix used to probe the underlying structure of the tests was appropriate. And finally the SPSS extracted six factors as the underlying construct of the 20 items of the questionnaire.

3. Results

According to reliability Statistics the Cronbach's alpha reliability for the questionnaire is .84 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.844	20

The results of item statistics (Table 2) indicated that item 2 had a low item total correlation (.21 < .30). The omission of none of the items had changed the reliability index significantly (last column).

Table 2

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	76.67	82.360	.379	.839
Q2	76.51	84.005	.218	.845
Q3	76.89	80.280	.367	.840
Q4	76.78	80.624	.388	.838
Q5	76.86	78.507	.508	.833
Q6	76.78	78.602	.459	.835
Q7	76.83	78.365	.516	.833
Q8	77.03	80.729	.343	.841
Q9	76.90	79.979	.356	.840

Q10	77.03	78.167	.509	.833
Q11	76.24	81.265	.402	.838
Q12	76.54	79.801	.521	.834
Q13	76.48	79.915	.421	.837
Q14	76.80	78.229	.457	.835
Q15	76.41	79.705	.488	.834
Q16	76.98	75.617	.524	.832
Q17	76.67	77.910	.447	.836
Q18	76.62	81.316	.335	.841
Q19	76.53	82.409	.321	.841
Q20	76.38	79.901	.531	.833

Construct Validity of the Questionnaire

A factor analysis through varimax rotation is carried out to underlying construct of the 20 items of the questionnaire. The assumptions of sampling adequacy and sphericity were met. As displayed in Table 3 the KMO index of .75 was higher than the criterion of .60. Thus it can be concluded that the present sample size was adequate for the factor analysis.

Table 3

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.756
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	551.490
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The correlation matrix used to probe the underlying structure of the tests was appropriate. The Bartlett's chi-square of 551.49 was significant ($p = .000 < .05$). The SPSS extracted six factors as the underlying construct of the 20 items of the questionnaire. This six-factor solution accounted for 47.48 percent of the total variance.

Table 3

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.231	26.156	26.156	4.755	23.775	23.775	2.481	12.404	12.404
2	1.976	9.878	36.034	1.595	7.973	31.748	1.710	8.552	20.956

3	1.547	7.736	43.769	.995	4.973	36.721	1.605	8.027	28.983
4	1.406	7.031	50.800	.963	4.813	41.534	1.563	7.815	36.798
5	1.141	5.704	56.504	.631	3.153	44.687	1.323	6.615	43.413
6	1.072	5.359	61.863	.559	2.794	47.481	.814	4.068	47.481
7	.926	4.629	66.492						
8	.868	4.338	70.830						
9	.808	4.040	74.870						
10	.736	3.678	78.548						
11	.692	3.458	82.006						
12	.679	3.393	85.399						
13	.629	3.145	88.545						
14	.459	2.296	90.841						
15	.448	2.238	93.078						
16	.355	1.776	94.854						
17	.337	1.684	96.538						
18	.256	1.282	97.820						
19	.237	1.187	99.007						
20	.199	.993	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

And finally Table 4 displays the factor loadings. The items loading under a single factor belong to the same family, i.e. they measure the same underlying construct. For example; items (1, 5, 14, 15, 16 and 20) loaded under the first factor. Thus it can be concluded that they were measuring the same construct.

Table 4

Rotated Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q15	.925					
Q14	.700					
Q16	.527				.396	
Q1	.469					
Q20	.381			.356		
Q5	.331					
Q7		.831				
Q6		.794				
Q12			.807			

Q13			.482			
Q4			.414			
Q11			.308			
Q8				.605		
Q18				.493		.326
Q10	.337		.307	.450		
Q9				.420		
Q2				.370		
Q19					.644	
Q17					.642	
Q3						.595

Some of the items showed multiple loadings (items 16, 20, 18, 10). These items need to be modified. Item 3 loaded alone on the sixth factor should also be revised.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using the notes prepared by learners for supposedly cheating purpose on their learning. More specifically, the study sought to find out the effect of using such materials as a learning strategy on reducing their stress and panic before final examination and their attitude towards performance on the final examination. For a pilot study with the present limited number of subjects the results are promising. It should be emphasized that the main study will be done again by revised items and when administered to a larger sample, better results are expected. Therefore, it is hoped that ELT instructors could benefit from the findings of the current study by attempt using students' notes as an effective learning strategy. Such a strategy may result in engaging the students in using their notes in a positive way as a learning strategy before their final examinations.

5. Recommendations

Since the current investigation was restricted to ELT group, generalization is limited. The study gathered information through whole group in the class, however the students who use mal-intended notes may have different aims in using them. Some students use them because they are not ready for exam, but the others may use for guaranty. Further studies should consider these two apart. Also it may conclude differently according to students' gender.

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